

SCOTTISH EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

The Child Care Service at Work

*Report prepared for
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Contents

FOREWORD	Page 5
THE CHILD CARE SERVICE AT WORK	7
ORIGIN, SCOPE AND METHOD	7
SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES AFFECTING THE PARTICIPANTS AT THE TIME OF THE STUDY	9
TOTAL WORKING TIME	10
THE PROFESSIONAL WORKER'S DAY	12
PLACES OF WORK, AND TRAVELLING	14
THE DEPARTMENT AND ITS FUNCTIONS	15
ACTIVITIES OF PROFESSIONAL STAFF	19
RECORDERS' OWN ESTIMATES OF THE ALLOCATION OF THEIR TIME	24
SECRETARIAL ASSISTANTS	24
PAPER WORK	26
WORK CONTACTS	27
DEALING WITH CASES	31
WORK FOR OTHER AUTHORITIES	33
CONCLUSION	39



Foreword

SINCE 1948 every city, large burgh and county (and their English equivalent) have been obliged by statute either to have a Children's Committee and a Children's Officer of their own or to combine with another local authority to appoint a joint committee or officer. Most Scottish authorities have chosen the former. The Children's Committee must consist mainly or wholly of elected members of the authority. It can include non-members with relevant training or experience; although this seldom happens in practice. The Children's Officer must be appointed after consultation with the Secretary of State (to ensure that he is suitable). Subordinate staff may be appointed to assist him; and unless their duties are purely routine and clerical they are known as Child Care Officers. Some large authorities have Deputy Children's Officers. This staff makes up what is known as the Children's Department of the local authority, and its size and structure varies not only with the size of the population in the local authority's area, but also with the staffing policy of each authority.

No formal qualifications have been prescribed for Children's Officers or Child Care Officers. Many officers of Children's Departments learned their jobs by experience before specialised training was a possibility. But an increasing number have the Child Care Certificate which is awarded as a result of one of the University courses in this subject which have been developed in recent years.

A Children's Department's functions can be divided into those it must perform and those which it may perform if this accords with the policy of the authority; but both are broadly speaking concerned with the welfare of children who, for reasons other than their own ill-health, are being prevented from having a normal upbringing in their own homes.

The most important obligatory function of the Children's Department is taking charge of, and caring for, children whose parents (or guardians) have died, abandoned or lost them, or are prevented by illness, disablement, or other reasons from looking after them properly; and children whom courts place in the local authority's care, usually because they are delinquent, or falling into bad company or beyond their parents' control. Unless or until the child's parents or other relatives are able and willing to look after him properly, the Children's Department must do so. Preferably they should board him out with carefully chosen foster-parents, whom they must visit at regular intervals; but if "boarding-out" is impracticable or undesirable for the time being – for example, because there are not enough suitable foster-parents or because the child is in care for only a short time – they may place him in a Children's Home. Children's Departments can run Homes of their own, and the majority do; but they may also make use of the many registered Homes run by voluntary organisations.

In the course of this work most Children's Departments are brought into contact with cases in which help and advice to the parents may make it possible for them to continue to look after their families, and so prevent a situation in which the children have to be taken into the authority's care. "Preventive work," as it is called, is not a duty of the local authorities, but many Departments regard it as an essential part of an enlightened child-care policy.

The second obligatory function is the registration of adoption societies and the supervision of arrangements for adoption where this is not being done by a registered society. The Children's Department may also (although this is not an obligation) act as an adoption agency themselves and find adoptive parents for children, whether in their care or not, whose natural parents consent to this.

The third obligatory function is visiting and seeing to the well-being of children who are being looked after for reward by private persons who are not related to them - an arrangement which can be abused.

The fourth obligatory function is the provision of a remand home for their area. In practice only a minority of Scottish authorities provide their own remand home; most rely on those provided by the nearest city or by one or two other authorities with large populations, or have an arrangement with a local household which is able to look after the occasional remanded child.

As in every other field of social work, rising standards are making increasing demands on the time of already hard-worked child care staff, and the supply of trained recruits is not yet equal to the demand for them. In these circumstances the importance of ascertaining precisely how the scarce and valuable personnel spend their working days is obvious. This is a question to which "estimates" and "impressions" are not sufficiently reliable answers; factual research is necessary.

NIGEL WALKER.

The Child Care Service at Work

Origin, Scope and Method

1. In the autumn of 1959 we were asked by the Scottish Home Department, at that time responsible for the Child Care Service in Scotland, to undertake an enquiry which would provide the Scottish Advisory Council on Child Care with information about the nature of the demands on the time of child care staff. There were other and complicating features of the issues confronting the Council, and it was agreed that a general enquiry into the working situation and into the composition of the working life of members of the child care service might provide useful information in a number of respects besides those immediately engaging the attention of the Council.

2. It appeared that such an enquiry might well follow the lines of former studies of industrial managers carried out by one of the writers some years ago¹ and which served as a model for a more recent enquiry into the working activities of probation officers in England. The method is to arrange for records of how they are spending their time to be kept by a number of people over a period of some weeks. In order to obtain standardised and therefore comparable records, and in order also to render the task of recording as light as possible, a time sheet is devised for the participants which allows them to describe what they are doing by marking one out of several kinds of task or activity which previous discussion with the recorders themselves has suggested are relevant to their work. One sheet is used for one episode. An episode is said to end and another to begin when *either* the task *or* the persons one meets (or with whom one was communicating) changes. A copy of the form eventually devised for this study is shown in Figure 1.

3. After consulting professional organisations and individuals, we decided on children's departments in seven local authorities as providing a reasonably representative sample of the service in Scotland. The authorities were one highland county, two burghs in the west of Scotland and two in the east, one county in the industrial west and one joint county authority in the industrial east. The largest county authority administered an area containing over 300,000 people, at an average density of 59 persons to every 100 acres, while the smallest had just over 50,000 at an average density of 2 persons to every 100 acres. The largest burgh of the four had four times the population of the smallest.

4. The seven children's departments, when approached, were all willing to take on the extra burdens in which participation in this study involved them. While there was some variation in the degree of detail with which different departmental groups recorded their activities, every single person who undertook to record his activities did so with commendable diligence, and we should record our extreme indebtedness to all thirty-four.

(1) V. Tom Burns: "The directions of Activity and Communications in a Departmental Executive Group" *Human Relations*, Vol. VII, pp. 73-97.
"Management in Action" *Operational Research Quarterly*, Vol. VIII, pp. 45-60.

5. When the make-up of the form had been finally agreed with all recorders, it was printed, bound in pads of fifty, and distributed to them, together with a memorandum concerning the procedure, which had also been agreed beforehand, and a supply of stamped addressed envelopes in which they could put each day's completed forms and despatch them directly to us. These were treated as confidential matter. The information contained in the report eventually submitted to all recorders alike was in the form of aggregate figures for the whole period.

6. The average number of schedules completed each day by each recorder was in the region of thirty-five. The period of consecutive recording was four weeks, which, after some delays and postponements, occurred in April and May, 1960. Although the start was staggered over some ten days, in order to allow some consultation between ourselves and recorders on the first day, and in order also to deal with the flow of records, which were posted off to us every day, the records may be treated as virtually simultaneous.

7. At the end of the recording run of four weeks, each participant was supplied with a list of all the names and initials of persons and of the cases of children entered on his forms and asked to identify them according to a few simple categories and by department. He was also asked to guess how his time during those weeks had been distributed among the subjects listed on the form, and how much time he had spent in travelling.

8. Concerning the results, there are three provisos to be made. First, and most important, the records are in no way objective; they are statements made by individuals about what they thought - or thought we ought to know - they were doing. Secondly, the records vary in precision and accuracy. While it was suggested that brief trivial episodes (for example, an unsuccessful telephone call) might safely be ignored, but that episodes lasting two or three minutes or upwards or briefer episodes, if important, should be recorded, the diligence with which individual recorders adhered to this general ruling varied. Moreover, thirdly, some recorders tended more than others to run episodes together, using one sheet to record two or more consecutive affairs involving two or more activities and two or more respondents; the procedure followed with such time-sheets was to split them equally between persons and activities: thus a time-sheet recording an episode dealing with two activities in company with three persons would be represented by six punched cards, each constituting a sixth of the total time as recorded.

9. The method used in this study does not achieve any more objectivity than any other; the vocabulary used in recording is very limited. But the results are vastly more detailed than are yielded by any of the methods in ordinary use, and, if participants are reasonably honest people, much more accurate, as we shall see, than are their own impressions given in response to questions about their working life.

10. The report is not intended to constitute an assessment of the effectiveness with which the functions of the Child Care Service are discharged by children's departments; it is clear, we hope, that the study did not provide evidence on which such judgments could be based. The observations and inferences made in the report bear on the way in which the time of the members of these departments was distributed among the several activities which make up their total task, among the kinds of client they served, and among the other individuals, public departments and other bodies with whom their work involved them.

Special Circumstances affecting the Participants at the time of the Study

11. No professional worker follows an unchanging routine. No period of four weeks can therefore be regarded as an entirely representative sample of his activities. Nevertheless, we have felt able to assume that the period was reasonably normal for most people for that part of the year. The Easter weekend was taken as a holiday by one department; one children's officer and an assistant children's officer were absent on holiday for a week; one secretarial assistant was absent, ill, for a fortnight, and two others for a week, and there were one or two others absent for a day. Two circumstances of the particular time of year had some bearing on the work of departments. The end of the financial year meant that all departments had to clear up their accounts. It was also suggested that the proximity of municipal elections reduced somewhat the meetings and correspondence between departmental staffs and the conveners and members of children's committees. The other remarks elicited - "fewer visits with councillors to distant areas" by one children's officer, "fewer children than usual received into care" by another, and "more time than usual spent in committee work" from a third serve rather to underline the normality of the recording period. All professional workers seemed to regard the amount of work and the kind of activities involved in it as reasonably normal.

12. Unanticipated differences did reveal themselves, however, in the nature of the responsibilities normally discharged by the departments. We have taken some care to identify these differences, and they seem in the main to amount to three.

13. The children's officer may or may not be appointed *curatores ad litem* by courts when applications are made for adoption orders. For the largest department, this work seems to have been particularly heavy, averaging ten petitions a month, each of which required investigation of the circumstances of the families and homes concerned, the situation of the child, attendance at court, and the preparation of a report to the court. Children's Officers in three other authorities: "Highland County," "Burgh B" and "Burgh D", were also automatically or customarily appointed *curatores ad litem*, and were involved in two, six, and two cases respectively during the recording period.

14. While all children's departments are responsible for making out statements of allowances to be paid on account of children's accommodation and other expenses, and for assessing the contributions to be paid by parents, actual payment and collection are usually performed by the Finance Department of the authority. In "Highland County," however, payment is also made by the Children's Department. In all authorities except "Burgh C" and "Eastern County", parental contributions were collected by the children's departments.

15. There were some differences in the practice of different departments concerning children in need of care under five years old who were also either in need of medical attention, outside hospital or home, or were in need of care because of the illness of the mother or both parents. In either set of circumstances, children in "Burgh B" became the concern of the Medical Officer of Health. In every other authority they were the responsibility of the children's officer except when treatment in a medical institution was prescribed. In "Highland County", indeed, children in need of a convalescent period away from home are admitted to the Children's Home at the request of the Medical Officer.

16. One other peculiarity needs mention: in "Western County" a good deal of the work of accounting and controlling payments arising from the conduct of the services is carried out by the Children's Department. Pay bills for all salaries and wages, for example, are made out by the Department - work which involves all the work of a wages department, including keeping income tax and superannuation records. The children's officer is likewise responsible for the financial, as well as general, administration of Children's Homes. The authority does not give cash allowances for buying clothing, but issues requisition or order forms to foster-parent: this "entails quite a bit of correspondence, checking and certifying accounts, preparation of order forms, etc., as well as the maintenance of an individual record of expenditure under this heading for each child in care". And, lastly, the authority insists on children in care who are in paid employment saving part of their weekly earnings: "the appropriate Savings Bank Account Books are kept in our office to ensure that the deposits are made and that there is no undue encroachment on these funds. At the present time we have sixty-seven such bank books in our possession, and, of course, are required to maintain accurate records of the individual accounts".

Total Working Time

17. Thirty-four people co-operated in the survey. Of them, seven were children's officers, ten were child care officers (among whom we include some designated as assistant or deputy children's officers), twelve were secretaries-typists, and four were accounts clerks; there was one half-time typist. Children's officers and child care officers are referred to in this report as professional staff, and all others as secretarial or administrative assistants.

Table 1. Working Hours Recorded

Recorder	Authority							Hours
	Highland County	Burgh A	Burgh B	Western County	Burgh C	Burgh D	Eastern County	All
Children's Officer .	163	156	198	125	173	175	186	1175
Assistant C.O. .	—	—	103	166	159	145	—	—
Child Care Officer 1 .	—	—	—	152	—	—	190	—
Child Care Officer 2 .	—	—	—	134	—	—	225	—
Child Care Officer 3 .	—	—	—	146	—	—	173	—
All Professional Staff .	163	156	301	723	332	320	774	2768
Secretarial Asst. 1 .	151	134	152	137	137	153	142	—
Secretarial Asst. 2 .	80*	—	—	119	146	—	109	—
Secretarial Asst. 3 .	—	—	—	134	—	—	—	—
Secretarial Asst. 4 .	—	—	—	58	—	—	—	—
Admin. Asst. 1 .	—	—	—	137	—	—	—	—
Admin. Asst. 2 .	—	—	—	134	—	—	—	—
Admin. Asst. 3 .	—	—	—	137	—	—	—	—
Admin. Asst. 4 .	—	—	—	134	—	—	—	—
All Clerical Staff .	231	134	152	990	283	153	251	2194
All Departmental Staff .	394	290	453	1713	615	473	1025	4962

* Part-time typist

18. In all, they recorded 4,958 hours of working time. Counted in this total is all the time spent 'at work' (i.e. in the department) plus any other 'working time' during the four-week period. Working time included all travelling as well as all departmental duties and activities connected with one's employment or professional status. It also included time spent in coffee and in tea breaks in the department's office, any meals when professional matters were discussed or when clients were present, and all work, including reading documents and professional literature, done at home. Recorded episodes relating to 'private and personal' matters *outside* any office are excluded from the total, and from all subsequent figures.

19. All results are expressed in this report in terms of time, and usually as a percentage of the total working time recorded by an individual, a departmental group, or all recorders. In order to provide a basis for the comparisons made in this way, we set out below the total number of hours recorded by everybody who took part. It must be remembered, however, that the total working time was affected in some instances by holiday and sickness absence, and in others by attendance at conferences and by journeys to the south of England.

20. The total working time differed for children's officers, child care officers, and secretarial and administrative assistants. Children's officers recorded 1175 hours, an average of 168 hours each. If allowance is made for holiday and sickness absence, a "normal" working week amounts to 45 hours. Other professional workers recorded an average of 159 hours each, with a "normal working week" of 43½ hours. Secretarial and administrative staff recorded an average of 133 hours each, and worked a normal week of 36 hours.

21. There was little variation between individual clerical assistants in the same department, and no more than an hour between departments. Professional workers showed much more variation—from a 38 hour week for one child care officer to a 56 hour week for another. These times are averages for the four weeks. Professional members of the service thus work rather longer hours, on average, than most industrial executives and, probably, most professional workers, and some work much longer hours. Also, their work, in most cases, is done under pressure—i.e. it involves demands which they must regard as overriding obligations. In addition, the hours which compose this working week are neither regular nor of their own choosing. While some managed to keep their weekends (from Saturday midday to Monday morning) free, others did not, and all children's officers and most other professional workers found themselves working late in the evening, two or three times a week.

22. The suggestion that some senior professional workers in the service work long hours is not, of course, related to any absolute conception of a working week appropriate for children's officers. The point here is that a professional worker's time is not infinitely elastic, and when the day is filled with demands of an immediate kind, there may be little time for the important, but deferrable, matters of policy and organisation, and none at all for matters of purely professional interest, such as reading professional literature or attending meetings and lectures. Our results also contain strong suggestions that the pressure of immediate obligations may make sizeable inroads on activities regarded as essential parts of the professional job.

The Professional Worker's Day

23. Almost every day would begin for children's officers and child care officers at their office, at nine o'clock. Some minutes would elapse, usually in conversation with other members of the staff about their own personal affairs or the department's, or about the world at large, before they settled down to deal with correspondence and urgent paper work. This would last until a break for tea or coffee at, or just before, eleven o'clock. Children's officers would then resume the same kind of work, but many child care officers would be able to leave for their first visits after eleven, returning for lunch. Most professional workers would be out visiting during most of the afternoon and early evening.

24. However, each day would depart from this norm to a greater or less extent, and it may be more enlightening to compare an account of a single working day from the schedules of two recorders, one the Children's Officer in "Highland County", the only professional worker in the department, the other a child care officer in one of the largest departments, in an industrial county in Central Scotland. The two days' records have been taken at random from the 350 days' records which were returned by all professional workers.

25. On April 18th, 1960, the Children's Officer of a "Highland County" arrived at her office at 9.0 a.m. Her day thereafter followed these lines:

- 9.00- 9.10 Chatted with the two secretary-typists in her own office.
- 9.10- 9.17 Wrote reports on a child in care and a child who was expected to be received into care.
- 9.17- 9.35 Read incoming letters.
- 9.35- 9.50 Made notes for committee.
- 9.50-10.00 Dictated letters concerning an adoption case to solicitors and to the child's parents.
- 10.00-10.07 Telephoned social welfare officer of the county about a child in care.
- 10.07-10.15 Dictated letters to parents of an adopted child.
- 10.15-10.20 Wrote letter to National Association of Local Government Officers.
- 10.20-10.50 Dictated letters to foster parents about the children placed with them, in one case dealing with a legal issue.
- 10.50-11.07 Tea break.
- 11.07-11.45 Dictated letter to the Sheriff's court concerning an adoption case.
- 11.45-11.55 Discussed three cases of children - one in care, another coming into care, and the third likely to come into care - with the secretary.
- 11.55-12.25 Dictated notes on five cases.
- 12.25-12.35 Dictated notes on a problem family (a 'preventive' case).
- 12.35-12.45 Dictated letter to a child in care.
- 12.50- 1.20 Went along to Medical Officer of Health's Department to talk to secretary about administrative matters.
- 1.20- 2.15 Lunch.
- 2.15- 2.25 Returned to office, telephoned Y.W.C.A. about girls formerly in care.
- 2.25- 2.35 Signed letters.
- 2.40- 3.00 Drove to shops to buy clothing for children in hospital.
- 3.00- 3.20 Drove to hospital and saw ward sister (delivering clothes).
- 3.20- 4.00 Drove to foster home.
- 4.00- 5.00 Talked to twin girls and discussed them with the foster-mother.
- 5.00- 5.40 Drove back to office.
- 5.40- 5.55 Telephoned to doctor concerning a mother in hospital.
- 5.55- 6.00 Drove to Children's Home.
- 6.00- 6.10 Talked to housemother about the children.
- 6.10- 6.30 Drove to hospital.
- 6.30- 6.40 Interview with doctor.
- 6.40- 6.55 Talked with doctor, nurse, and three children, now to be taken into care.
- 6.55- 7.10 Talked with the mother in hospital.
- 7.10- 7.15 Drove two of the children to Children's Home.

- 7.15- 7.20 Handed children to housemother.
- 7.20- 7.28 Drove to station to collect luggage for children.
- 7.28- 7.35 Drove back to Children's Home.
- 7.35- 8.00 Talked with different children in Children's Home.
- 8.00- 8.10 Discussed new arrivals and another child with housemother.

26. Not every evening brought its emergency, but the composition of the whole day is by no means unusual, and the sequence after 5.40, when the children's officer arrived back at her office to find, presumably, a message of some urgency asking her to telephone the hospital, until two and a half hours later, when she finally left the Children's Home, is quite characteristic.

27. The day drawn from the records of the Child Care Officer in Central Scotland is 30th April. She arrived at 9.14 a.m.

- 9.14- 9.35 Conversation with a colleague about one child coming into care, another child in care, and about things in general.
- 9.35- 9.37 A telephone call suggesting that there is a need to investigate the situation in the house of one of the caller's neighbours.
- 9.37- 9.41 The Children's Officer entered; some general conversation.
- 9.41- 9.49 Discussion with Children's Officer and a colleague about the recording survey itself.
- 9.49-9.56 Sorted files, mentioned a matter concerning the placing of a child being received into care, and looked out a 'mileage form'. The Children's Officer returned.
- 9.56-10.00 Discussed a child in care and the Children's Home with the Children's Officer.
- 10.00-10.06 Completed the 'mileage form.'
- 10.06-10.21 Looked out files and wrote up case-diary and notes.
- 10.21-10.43 Wrote report on a possible adoptive home, and telephoned about another, interrupted by -
- 10.30-10.39 Another call from a neighbour concerning a problem family.
- 10.43-10.48 Discussed the family of a child in care with colleague.
- 10.48-11.00 Interviewed child in care and wrote notes on the result.
- 11.00-11.19 The prospective foster parent who had telephoned earlier arrived for an interview.
- 11.19-11.28 Resumed notes on interview with child in care.
- 11.28-11.32 Notes on family with child likely to be received into care.
- 11.32-11.37 Telephoned by the M.O.H's. Department of another authority about a child in care, and noted this.
- 11.37-11.45 Telephoned by a colleague in another Children's Department about Association of Child Care Officers affairs.
- 11.45-11.52 Resumed notes interrupted at 11.37.
- 11.52-11.55 Read case notes on various children.
- 11.55-12.28 Wrote and dictated notes on cases, on placing children, on possible homes for children for adoption, and on parent's contribution to children's upkeep.
- 12.28-12.29 Telephoned by Housing Department concerning eviction.
- 12.29-12.31 Looked out case papers of a child in the family concerned.
- 12.31-12.58 Arranged programme of afternoon visits, interrupted by -
- 12.37-12.39 Telephoned by police concerning child not in care.
- 12.39-12.50 Telephoned to Children's Officer concerning child in family under notice of eviction.
- 12.50-12.55 Telephoned to Housing Department about families under notice of eviction.
- 12.55- 1.11 Driving.
- 1.11- 1.40 Lunch.
- 1.40- 1.45 Called at police headquarters to discuss child reported an hour before.
- 1.45- 2.10 Personal shopping.
- 2.10- 2.53 Drove to home of parents of a child in care to discuss family problems.
- 2.53- 3.07 Further conversation involving the family, in street with a neighbour.
- 3.07- 3.13 Driving.
- 3.15- 3.17 Driving.
- 3.17- 3.48 Conversation with child and foster-parent at child's home.
- 3.48- 3.54 Drove to another foster parent's home, but found no one at home.
- 3.54- 4.01 No one at home for another visit.

4.01- 4.35	Drove to home of 'problem family' and
4.35- 4.46	talked to mother and two children.
4.46- 5.07	Driving.
5.07- 5.17	Telephoned to Children's Officer about foster home.
5.17- 5.21	Waiting to . . .
5.21- 6.14	Interview prospective foster parents.
6.14- 6.21	Driving.
6.21- 6.25	Conversation about adoption of a child in care with relative of child.
6.25- 6.31	Driving.
6.31- 7.14	At foster-home, talking with foster-mother and children.
7.14- 7.21	Driving.
7.21- 7.35	Discussed adoption of baby with mother.
7.35- 7.39	Driving.
7.39- 8.08	At child's family home, talking to parents and to child.

28. Many days were much less long and crowded, but the general impression of a busy morning of office work, and a long series of visits in the afternoon, expanded by one or two urgent cases into the evening, occurs frequently enough in the records returned by professional workers.

Places of Work, and Travelling

29. All analyses of the records were of the aggregate time allocated to each item in the five different sections of the schedule: case concerned, if any; persons communicated with or present, if any; mode of activity (conversation, writing, driving, etc.); place; and professional activity. Most professional workers, as the two examples we have given show, spent more than half their time outside their own offices. Taking all 17 professional workers, slightly less than half their time (48 per cent.) was spent in their own office, 5 per cent. was spent in other offices, 14 per cent. in visits to children's homes, foster homes and family homes, and 7 per cent. in meeting, waiting in the street, police stations, and halts on journeys. Of the remainder, very small fractions were spent in working at home (1 per cent.) and in courts (0.4 per cent.). Almost one quarter of all their time (24 per cent.) was spent in travelling. (One per cent. is equivalent to an average of about 25 minutes in a week for each professional worker).

30. There were some fairly wide divergences from these averages. Travelling time varied from 16 per cent. of the time of the Children's Officer of "Burgh D" to 30 per cent. of the time of two Child Care Officers in "Eastern County". Against the average of 53 per cent. of time spent in offices, Child Care Officer 2 of "Eastern County" spent 33 per cent. and the Assistant Children's Officer of "Burgh B" spent 70 per cent. Similar fluctuations are apparent in the proportion of time spent in children's homes and in the foster and family homes of children. The Children's Officer of "Western County" spent 7 per cent. of time in these places, and Child Care Officer 1 of "Eastern County" 24 per cent., the average for all professional workers being 14 per cent.

31. Only half the professional workers spent any time in courts, the total for them amounting in most cases to an hour or so for the whole four weeks. Most officers in the two largest authorities recorded from two to seven hours' work done at home during the period, but this hardly occurred at all in the five smaller authorities. Indeed, when all time spent in offices, travelling, and children's and family homes is left out of account, nearly all the nine per cent. of working time remaining was spent in the meeting rooms of conferences, in restaurants and hotels, and the street.

32. Clerical workers recorded much more restricted movements. Almost nine-tenths of their time was spent in their own offices, and if time spent in other offices is added, only four per cent. of their working time is left. Nevertheless it is worth noticing that four of the six secretarial workers employed by the five smaller authorities spent some time (an aggregate of fifteen hours for the whole four weeks) in children's homes, and in family and foster homes. None of this occurred in the two largest authorities.

33. The time spent by professional workers in travelling is undoubtedly the most notable feature of this section of the study. There are two aspects of this worth remarking: first, the very size of the proportion of time spent in this way: 24 per cent. Put another way, travelling takes up all the time of one children's officer or one child care officer out of every four employed in the service. Most journeys were made alone, but there were occasions when travelling was done in company with a colleague or on lengthy journeys with a child, so that some journeys provided opportunities for discussion and conversation. Secondly this quarter of professional workers' time spent in travelling seems to obtain regardless of the size, population and character of the local government authority. The Children's Officers of "Highland County" and of the smallest of the four burghs both spent 26 per cent. of their time in this way.

34. All recorders were asked to estimate the proportion of time spent in travelling during the period. The estimate from the "Highland County" Children's Officer gave 50 per cent. of time, although this, like some other estimates, seems to have been intended to include all work done on journeys. In every other case, except that of one child care officer, estimates were lower: two, indeed, suggested 5 per cent. of their time as spent on journeys as against actual figures of 24 and 26 per cent. Commonly, professional workers are unaware of how large a part of their working life is spent in vehicles.

The Department and its Functions

35. How was the time spent in their different places used? In discussions beforehand with recorders and the committee of the Scottish Children's Officers' Association, all activities liable to be recorded were thought to be classifiable under seventeen headings. They are shown in Figure 1.

36. These activities for the most part accord with the ordinary divisions of local authority child care work. In some cases (11 and 12) they represent legal rather than functional divisions. Four activities call for explanation: "Organisation and Finance, Committee Preparation" was intended to serve as a residual class of activity, and comprised all office routines not separately classified, (e.g. filing, duplicating, typing, accounts, stocktaking), "General Conversation with Children" was intended to include the occasions on which officers were talking with children, or merely in their company, without there being any specific problem of welfare or administration to elucidate, "General Service Matters" was intended to relate to the affairs of the local authority or of the professional association, e.g. to any activity arising because of one's employment situation or professional status, "Private and Personal" was to be used for any occasion not directly or indirectly connected with work; it included all coffee and tea breaks, making tea and coffee and washing up.

37. When we came to examine the completed schedules, it appeared that, despite our precautions, different interpretations had been given to certain of these

seventeen activities. Several recorders had not discriminated between "Investigating Family and Personal Problems" and "Family Problems of Children Not in Care". Other discrepant interpretations affected these two latter activities and "Investigating Reported Need for Care". Lastly, the distinction between placing children and investigating prospective foster or adoptive homes seems to have proved rather artificial. In this report, therefore, we are reducing the number of separate activities used to fourteen.

38. Before discussing the separate activities themselves, we may observe that they may be grouped under four headings, each representing a generally recognised aspect of the work of children's departments: supervision of children in care, supplementary professional duties, administration, preventive work.

39. "Supervision" represents the activities concerned with children in care, which represent the central task of the department. In "Supervision" we include supervision of homes, looking for new homes, placing children, reporting on progress, reception and discharge, legal and administrative matters and family problems (Activities 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10). There are, secondly, a number of activities ancillary or supplementary to these central matters: the legal and administrative responsibilities concerning adoption, child life protection and outfitting children. Under this heading we include also those contacts with children which one would expect to make the difference between an entirely formal, administration function and a reasonably human relationship between children in such circumstances and the professional workers responsible for their physical and mental welfare. This group, then, includes the activities numbered 11, 12, 14 and 15. Thirdly, administration, office routines and the like, together with matters affecting employment and one's professional life, form a distinctive group (Activities 13 and 16). Last, there is an important sector of activities (1, 2 and 3) which concern children not in care and their families and which are directed towards rehabilitation or towards improvement of the situation of children and their parents and, it is hoped, towards averting the possibility of children coming into care. This we have labelled "Preventive work".

40. The distribution of time (4958 hours) between these four general functions (and personal and private matters which entered into working time) for all thirty-four recorders was:

Supervision, etc. of children in care	35 per cent.
Supplementary professional duties	9 " "
Administration	42 " "
Preventive work	7 " "
Personal matters	6 " "

41. If the figures relating to the seventeen professional workers only are considered, their 2769 hours were divided up between these major sections of activity thus:

Supervision, etc. of children in care.	48 per cent
Supplementary duties	13 " "
Administration	26 " "
Preventive work	10 " "
Personal matters	4 " "

42. How uniform these proportions are for the seven departments is shown in Table 2. To make for truer comparison we have excluded the four clerical assistants engaged in one department solely on accounts and similar matters which were elsewhere the concern of the Treasurer's department of the local authority.

Table 2. *Distribution of Departmental Time*

per cent.

<i>Kind of Activity</i>	<i>Highland County</i>	<i>Burgh A</i>	<i>Burgh B</i>	<i>Western County</i>	<i>Burgh C</i>	<i>Burgh D</i>	<i>Eastern County</i>
Supervision . . .	43	36	32	28	46	32	51
Supplementary . . .	14	8	14	10	10	14	6
Administration . . .	24	43	32	44	33	39	36
Preventive work . . .	7	7	16	8	7	10	5
Personal matters . . .	9	7	7	10	4	4	2

(General Classification)

43. All these sets of proportions show fairly wide fluctuations between departments. There is a suggestion that the larger the department, the more time is spent in administration, the apparent exception of "Burgh A", the smallest department, arising from the work done by the children's officer in connection with World Refugee Year. At all events one of the smallest departments, "Highland County", spent just over half the proportion of time which the largest department, "Western County", devoted to administration. It will be remembered (see para. 16) that the administrative and financial responsibilities of this latter department were set wider than most; they also included the supervision and financial control of four children's homes and one remand home.

44. Supervision - work directly concerned with children in care - occupied between 28 and 51 per cent. of departments' time. When departments' ancillary duties concerning children in care, adoption and the like, are added, the time spent on this work formed from 38 to 57 per cent. of working time - the average for all seven departments being 44 per cent.

45. The biggest variation of all occurs in preventive work, to which the "Eastern County" department gave 5 per cent. of its time (despite the fact that it worked the longest hours - see Table 1); in "Burgh B", although the Assistant Children's Officer was absent for over a week, the Department spent 16 per cent. of all its time in this way. The low figure for "Eastern County" has been explained as the consequence of a "drive for foster homes" which occupied the professional staff during the recording period. In any case, the amount of time devoted to preventive work seems determined largely by what remains free of other claims on time regarded as more pressing. Thus the percentages of 5 and 16 shown in Table 2 should be seen as roughly the limits between which children's departments in general operate rather than a fixed allocation of time given by each department to this kind of work.

46. Departments spent from 2 to 10 per cent. of working time in activities recorded as personal and private. Tea and coffee breaks account for almost all this time for most individuals, and was expanded a good deal by the time spent by some secretarial staff in making tea and coffee and in washing up.

47. In Table 3 details are given of the proportions of time devoted to each of the fourteen activities which made up the working time of each department.

48. To some extent, the heavy weighting given to administration in some departments is the product of a tendency by the secretarial staff in them to allot all typing work, regardless of what it concerned to this activity. However, this tendency is in itself an indication of the lack of direct implication in the professional activities of the department, a matter which we shall be able to examine later.

Table 3. The Activities of Children's Departments

per cent of working time

Activities	Departments							All Depts.
	Highland County	Burgh A	Burgh B	Western County	Burgh C	Burgh D	Eastern County	
9. Children's Progress, Welfare, etc.	17	22	20	16	21	19	24	20
8. Preventing and Recording cases	4	3	2	0	17	4	5	4
4. Family problems of Children in care	6	4	3	1	1	2	3	2
5. Receiving new cases	2	0	1	1	0	2	1	1
6. Legal problems of Children	10	6	1	1	1	1	2	2
7, 10. Placing Children and Investigating Prospective Homes	5	1	3	2	6	4	15	6
11. Adoptions	7	2	11	6	7	11	2	6
12. Child Life Protection	2	3	—	0	0	1	0	1
14. Conversation with Children	1	1	1	1	1	0	2	1
15. Outfitting and Purchases	3	1	2	1	2	2	2	2
13. Administration	19	20	20	56	29	36	19	34
16. Professional and General	6	22*	11	2	4	3	17†	8
1, 2, 3. Preventive Work	7	7	16	5	7	10	5	7
17. Private and Personal	9	7	7	8	4	4	2	6
Total No. of hours	395	289	454	1708	615	472	1025	4958
Total No. of Staff	2½	2	3	13	4	3	6	33½

* Includes work in connection with World Refugee Year

† Including attendance at conferences.

49. Nevertheless, Table 3 makes it clear that office work and kindred matters bulk very large in the life of most departments, an average of 34 per cent. of all time being spent in this way, which, together with time taken up with "professional and general", and "private and personal", activities, account for almost half of all working time. By contrast, the supervision of children in care took up a fifth of all departments' time, preventive work one fourteenth, and all other work on children and cases, a quarter.

50. Different departments, however, reveal considerable variation of this balance. "Burgh A" and "Eastern County" both recorded more time on "Children's progress, welfare etc." than on administration, although both spent very high proportions of time on "professional organisations and general matters." There are instances of special, and presumably temporary, preoccupations which took up a great deal of time from the whole department — the four members of "Burgh C's" staff spent over 100 of their 615 working hours in presenting and recording cases (work which fell largely on the clerical staff, and arose from the need to clear a backlog of recording and filing) and "Eastern County", with six members of staff, spent over 150 of their 1025 working hours on prospecting

for foster homes and placing children (work which fell almost entirely on the child care officers). "Burgh A" spent three hours during the whole four weeks on these activities. Time spent on these activities is presumably a direct reflection of different local conditions and the relative difficulty of finding suitable homes. The least variation from the average is revealed by the proportions of time spent by departments on what we have regarded as the core of children's departments' work - the supervision of children in care (Activity 9).

51. In most departments little or no time was spent in conversation with children (apart, that is, from occasions when they were "being seen" about some matter requiring the department's attention; these are dealt with subsequently). Most authorities had virtually no calls on their time arising from Child Life Protection duties. Time devoted to family problems of children in care ranged from 25 hours for one of the smallest authorities "Highland County" to 6 hours for one twice as large "Burgh C".

Activities of Professional Staff

52. Greater interest attaches to the way in which the time of professional workers was distributed among these activities, especially as they not only create and determine the work of clerical staff but operate in substantially different ways. However, in setting down and comparing their activities, we are confronted with the difficulty of the large part played in their work by travelling. Our procedure was to count each journey as time spent in the next activity, so far as this part of the analysis was concerned. It does, however, distort the picture of the actual work done even though, as we have remarked, some journeys done in company with colleagues or children may have provided opportunities for discussion.

53. In this section of the report, therefore, we are presenting the amount of time spent by professional staff on different activities exclusive of time spent on journeys made in connection with these activities. Table 4 deals with the six kinds of activity included under the heading of Supervision of Children in Care.

54. The effect of removing time spent on travelling from these results (for professional staff, for whom travelling bulked large), is generally to reduce the weight given to the activities included in the supervision of children in care and allied matters. All work concerned with the progress, welfare and future of children in care (Activity 9) took up hardly any more time than did travelling or organisation and office work (Activity 13; see Table 6). The "drive for new foster homes" mounted by "Eastern County" during the four weeks shows up clearly in the figures for Activities 7 and 10, which are far in excess of the average and constitute half the time spent on supervisory activities by the three Child Care Officers.

55. The total number of hours devoted to the central child care functions ranged from 19 hours to 61 hours for children's officers (an average of 5 to 15 hours a week) and from 24 to 78 for child care officers (an average of 6 to 20 hours a week).

56. The next group of activities, which we have entitled supplementary professional duties, is presented in the same way (i.e., omitting travelling time) in Table 5.

Table 4 Time Spent on Supervisory Activities by Professional Workers

per cent of total working time

Staff	Supervision, etc. of Children in Care					Time Spent on Supervisory Activities (4-10*)
	Child's Progress, Preserving and Welfare, etc. (0)	Family Problems of Children in Care (4)	Receiving New Cases (5)	Legal Problems (6)	Placing Children Investigating New Cases (7-10)	
<i>Highland County</i>						<i>Hours</i>
Children's Officer	29	5	6	2	2	61
<i>Burgh A</i>						
Children's Officer	17	4	6	0	9	44
<i>Burgh B</i>						
Children's Officer	21	6	2	2	0	49
Asst. Children's Officer	14	2	6	3	—	24
<i>Western County</i>						
Children's Officer	14	—	1	2	2	19
Deputy Children's Officer	22	2	9	1	4	58
Child Care Officer 1	35	—	1	4	—	52
Child Care Officer 2	48	—	0	—	0	58
Child Care Officer 3	46	—	0	2	0	55
<i>Burgh C</i>						
Children's Officer	30	1	1	—	1	47
Asst. Children's Officer	35	1	2	0	0	51
<i>Burgh D</i>						
Children's Officer	21	4	4	0	0	48
Asst. Children's Officer	21	9	3	3	2	46
<i>Eastern County</i>						
Children's Officer	20	1	1	0	3	45
Child Care Officer 1	22	9	4	—	2	78
Child Care Officer 2	21	0	5	3	4	78
Child Care Officer 3	17	10	6	2	4	65
All Professional Staff	25	4	3	1	2	878

* omitting time spent in travelling.

Table 5. Time spent on Supplementary Professional Duties of Professional Workers (omitting journeys)

per cent total working hours

Staff	Supplementary Professional Duties				Time Spent on Supplementary Professional Duties 11, 12, 14, 15
	Adoptions (11)	Child Life Protection (12)	Conversation with Children (14)	Outfitting and Purchases (15)	
<i>Highland County</i>					<i>Hours*</i>
Children's Officer . . .	7	1	2	3	16
<i>Burgh A</i>					
Children's Officer . . .	2	4	3	1	11
<i>Burgh B</i>					
Children's Officer . . .	14	—	2	0	24
Asst. Children's Officer . .	2	—	—	7	8
<i>Western County</i>					
Children's Officer . . .	4	—	1	0	5
Asst. Children's Officer . .	7	1	1	—	11
Child Care Officer 1 . . .	13	0	2	2	21
Child Care Officer 2 . . .	15	0	2	—	20
Child Care Officer 3 . . .	24	0	0	4	31
<i>Burgh C</i>					
Children's Officer . . .	7	0	1	0	10
Asst. Children's Officer . .	6	0	2	10	23
<i>Burgh D</i>					
Children's Officer . . .	13	1	0	1	23
Asst. Children's Officer . .	11	0	1	0	14
<i>Eastern County</i>					
Children's Officer . . .	0	0	8	1	13
Child Care Officer 1 . . .	2	0	1	0	7
Child Care Officer 2 . . .	3	1	0	2	9
Child Care Officer 3 . . .	2	—	0	4	11
All Professional Staff . . .	8	1	2	2	257

* Omitting time spent in travelling.

57. The outstanding feature of Table 5 is the variation it shows in the practice of different authorities. Child Life Protection duties took up negligible amounts of time virtually everywhere, but even in this case the Children's Officer of the smallest authority "Burgh B" spent over an hour a week on this aspect of his work as against the few minutes demanded of every other worker. The same observation applies to the general conversation with children (i.e., not necessarily connected with any particular problem or professional need); in this case, we find the Children's Officer of "Eastern County" recording 10½ hours as spent in this way, as against the few minutes or the hour or so of everyone else.

58. Adoption duties, which took up much the greatest part of time spent on this aspect of child care work, shows a good deal of variation between authorities. Professional staff in the largest authority spent altogether an eighth of all their time on these, and two child care officers 15 and 24 per cent. of their time. Yet in the next largest authority, the Children's Officer spent virtually no time on them, and the professional staff as a whole only 2 per cent. Elsewhere, one children's officer spent 14 per cent. of her time on adoption duties and another 13 per cent., while in the smallest authority it only amounted to 2 per cent. of the Children's Officer's time. The principal causes for these differences seem to lie outside the control of children's departments. We have already mentioned (para. 13) the difference in the practice of Sheriff's Courts in appointing *curatores ad litem* as having a bearing on differences in the time spent on adoption duties. Another factor of major importance is the existence or absence of a well organised and active adoption society in the area, which may relieve the children's department of a good deal of work, although statutory responsibilities naturally remain. Thirdly, it has been suggested that some areas act as adoption "reception areas" for other parts of the country, notably the larger industrial towns. There is a possibility that the work of different departments may be increased merely because of the need, under present arrangements, for both the departments responsible for the area from which an adopted child comes and the department for the receiving area to be involved in most of the procedures. In general the duplication of time and effort occasioned by the movement of children from one local authority area to another is said to be of less account than formerly, but is still irksome.

59. It should be added that a further suggestion has been offered as an explanation of the large differences in the amount of time spent by departments on adoption duties, which is that the obligations imposed on children's departments to supervise adoption arrangements are interpreted with a good deal of latitude, and that in some areas little supervision is in fact given. Allied to this is the complaint that some Courts neglect to inform the children's officer of proceedings involving adoption.

60. In Table 6, the total working time left for professional staff when the 24 per cent. spent in journeys is omitted is shown distributed among the major aspects of the departments' work, administration and office work and general service matters (Activities 13 and 16) being shown separately.

61. The professional staff of "Eastern County" appear to have regarded "General Service Matters" (Activity 16), as the appropriate category for recording their joint arrangements of case work and other professional duties; elsewhere this kind of activity was recorded as organisational (Activity 13) although it is true to say such business featured far more largely in the working time of this authority than in any other's. This peculiarity has to be taken into account when comparing the time spent on administration and on general service matters (i.e., arising from membership of the profession or employment by the local authority).

62. When this proviso is borne in mind, it is quite clear that the larger the department, the more of the children's officer's time is taken up in organisation and office work. In "Burgh B", the one exception, it is the junior professional worker who appears to have been mainly involved; in "Burgh C" also, the common and expected division of labour between Children's Officer and professional staff seems to have been reversed, the Assistant spending

31 per cent. of her time on organisational matters as against the Children's Officer's 25 per cent.

63. Junior staff in larger authorities were able to devote more of their time to the core activities of professional work. Of eight workers who spent above the average of 41 per cent. of operative working time (i.e. excluding travelling) on supervisory activities, seven are the junior members of the two largest departments.

64. In other respects, the smaller authorities show proportions of time devoted to supplementary duties and preventive work at least equal to the larger authorities. If we take Supervision of children in care, Supplementary professional duties, and Preventive work as constituting the main body of specifically professional work, the average proportion of operative working time spent on these activities is 64 per cent. Of the five workers who exceeded

Table 6. *Time Spent by Professional Workers in Administration and General Service Matters, Professional Duties, etc.*
(omitting journeys)

Staff	Admin. etc. (13)	General Service Matters (16)	General Classification of Activities				Total Workg. Time*	Total Trav. Time
			Super. etc. of Child. in Care	Suppl. Prof. Duties	Prev. Work	Priv. and Per.		
	Per cent		Per cent				hours	hours
Highland County Children's Officer .	12	6	50	13	11	7	120	43
Burgh A C.O. . .	6	31†	38	10	11	5	114	42
Burgh B C.O. . .	12	15	33	16	12	12	145	53
A.C.O. . .	25	5	28	9	26	7	85	18
Western County								
C.O. . .	60	5	19	5	10	1	100	25
A.C.O. . .	37	1	43	8	11	1	134	32
C.C.O. 1 . .	6	5	43	17	20	10	121	31
C.C.O. 2 . .	8	1	53	17	13	7	111	23
C.C.O. 3 . .	3	1	49	28	8	10	111	35
Burgh C C.O. . .	27	7	37	8	14	6	128	45
A.C.O. . .	31	4	41	18	5	1	125	21
Burgh D C.O. . .	32	2	32	15	17	1	147	28
A.C.O. . .	25	5	40	12	12	5	113	32
Eastern County C.O. .	24	28	33	9	4	1	135	51
C.C.O. 1 . .	13	23	52	5	6	2	149	41
C.C.O. 2 . .	10	26	50	6	8	1	157	68
C.C.O. 3 . .	16	12	55	6	8	2	119	54
All Professional Staff .	20	10	41	13	12	4	2115	643
Average							124	38

* Omitting Time spent in Travelling. † Largely absorbed in work for Youth Organisation and World Refugee Year

this average, four are in the two largest departments; of the eight who fell below it, four are in the two largest and four in the five smaller departments.

65. In many authorities, there are signs of a division of labour between professional staff, but they follow no common principle. In one, the children's officer took on most of the adoption duties, while her assistant devoted herself to most of the preventive work and placing children, and did most of the administrative work. In another, the division was – children's officer: preventive work, placing children; assistant children's officer: most of the work concerned with children's progress, welfare, etc., outfitting children. In the larger authorities, similar differences between individual professional workers are presumably the result of chance, since the practice in them is for the division of work to follow geographical lines, each child care officer assuming responsibility for a district. Nevertheless, there are clear differences in both larger authorities between the share borne by children's officers and their juniors of administrative work on the one hand, and of such duties as investigating prospective homes and placing children, adoptions, and preventive work on the other.

Recorders' Own Estimates of the Allocation of Their Time

66. All recorders were also asked to estimate the proportions of their time devoted to each of the seventeen activities. What we had in mind here was that departures from the actual figures might provide us with representations of two complementary notions: an ideal or stereotyped idea of the way in which each recorder thinks a person in his position ought to spend his time; and secondly, an estimate of the relative importance or burdensome nature of the several activities.

67. All but one of the professional workers underestimated the time spent on office work; some suggested percentages half the actual figure and even less. Most people grossly overestimated the amount of time devoted to preventive work. Serious overestimates occurred for the main professional activity of child's progress, welfare, etc., even though the time actually devoted to this activity (25 per cent., on average, of all operative working time) was swollen by the journeys done in connection with it to half as much again or more.

68. If the implications of these results are added to those discernible in the estimates of time spent in travelling, it is evident that child care workers have a very unrealistic picture of their working life. In fact, far less of their time is taken up with the professional activities which represent the *raison d'être* of their employment, and far more with the ancillary, though necessary, activities involved in managing official business and in getting to and from places. The distortions of this image of their occupational roles bear a close resemblance, it should be added, to those which have appeared from similar studies of industrial managers.

Secretarial Assistants

69. The clearest distinction between the largest and the six other departmental lies in the role of the secretarial assistants. In "Western County" the four secretarial assistants were concerned exclusively with typing, filing, operating the small telephone exchange and taking dictation, all activities falling under the

heading of the thirteenth subject (Organisation and Finance, etc.). In fact, 80 per cent. of their time was recorded against this one activity, the rest being spent on private and personal (18 per cent.) and general service matters (2 per cent.). Elsewhere, clerical assistants were far more integrated with the work of the department. Much of the time recorded by them as spent on other activities was, in fact, spent in typing letters and reports concerning them, but this was not altogether the case, and the fact itself that they identified such work according to its functional reference speaks for a closer involvement in the professional concerns of their departments. Table 7, giving the figures of the distribution of time by secretarial staff, shows this difference.

Table 7. *Activities of Secretarial Staff*

<i>Department</i>	<i>No. of Staff</i>	<i>Superm. etc. of Children in Care</i>	<i>Suppl. Prof. Duties</i>	<i>Prev. Work</i>	<i>Admin. and Office Work, General Matters</i>	<i>Private and Personal</i>	<i>Total Working Hours</i>
<i>Per cent</i>							
Highland County	1½	36	13	5	33	13	231
Burgh A	1	28	4	2	54	10	134
Burgh B	1	17	8	20	49	6	152
Western County	4	0	—	—	82	18	541
Burgh C	2	43	7	6	38	6	283
Burgh D	1	14	14	2	63	7	153
Eastern County	2	36	6	2	50	7	251

70. While there is no reason from our evidence to suppose that the involvement of secretarial assistants in the work of the department carried them into the sphere of professional case work, there are many instances in which it might be supposed that people in this position in some smaller authorities were taking a sizeable part in some of the responsibilities usually falling to the professional workers. This may be inferred from the figures which apply to the mode of activity. For instance, the full-time secretarial assistant in "Highland County" spent some 20 hours on "preventive work" activities, of which only 10 were spent in receiving dictation, typing, writing and reading. She also spent ten hours on outfitting children and buying equipment, of which only one was spent in clerical work. Similar observations apply to the secretarial assistants in "Burgh B" about Family Problems of Children not in Care, and in "Burgh D" about outfitting children. It is no part of our purpose to suggest that rigid demarcation lines should be drawn around the professional worker's sphere of activities, but the role of the secretarial assistant as receptionist and as the professional worker's aide possibly needs re-examination.

Paper work

71. Paper work, of course, plays a formidable part in the life of most professional workers. In the largest authority, dictation, writing and reading took up two-fifths of the time not only of the Children's Officer but of his deputy. Elsewhere, paper work was a good deal less important – as little as one-sixth of all professional time (including travelling) being spent in this way by the staff of "Eastern County", the next largest authority. In general, however, the smaller the authority, the less paper work seems to have been involved.

72. Some interest attaches to the results which show how far the time devoted to the professional activities we have put under the general heading of Supervisory Activities, Supplementary Duties and Preventive Work was in fact taken up by office work – i.e., dealing with reports, forms, documents and correspondence. Table 8 gives the relevant figures, by departments.

Table 8. *Proportion of Operative Working Time*Spent by Professional Staff in Paper Work*

<i>Professional Staff</i> <i>Department</i>	<i>Supervisory Activities</i>		<i>Supplementary Duties</i>		<i>Preventive Work</i>	
	<i>Total Hours</i>	<i>Proportion spent in paper work</i>	<i>Total Hours</i>	<i>Proportion spent in paper work</i>	<i>Total Hours</i>	<i>Proportion spent in paper work</i>
Highland County	61	23 %	16	16 %	13	17 %
Burgh A	44	30 %	11	6 %	13	5 %
Burgh B	73	24 %	32	36 %	40	12 %
Western County	242	53 %	88	36 %	71	17 %
Burgh C	98	39 %	33	22 %	25	4 %
Burgh D	94	37 %	37	46 %	42	11 %
Eastern County	266	22 %	40	13 %	37	12 %
All Professional Staffs .	879	35 %	255	30 %	238	12 %

*Omitting journeys

73. Clearly, office work does play a considerable part in what we have been treating as the professional work of children's departments – over a third of the time left from travelling which was spent on the main category of supervisory activities; this proportion mounts to over a half in the case of the largest department.

74. In fact, when paper work (together with travelling time) is deducted, the average number of hours per week spent on all supervisory activities, supplementary duties and preventive work, together amounted for each professional worker to 18 hours for "Highland County", 13 hours for "Burgh A", 16 hours for "Burgh B", 11 hours for "Western County", 14 hours for "Burgh C", 14 hours for "Burgh D", and 17 hours for "Eastern County".

75. The proportion of time spent by professional workers in written communication, interviews, etc., and other ways seem to have provoked some interest on their own account, and accordingly they are given in Table 9. The low proportion of time on written work achieved by some departments and individual workers seems partly owing to an ability to dictate reports and letters. In the largest department, for example, writing took up to 135 hours, nearly a fifth of all professional workers' time. Most of this was devoted to matters concerning

Table 9. *Modes of Activity*

Distribution of Total Working time, including journeys

per cent

	<i>Dictation, Reading, Writing</i>	<i>Conversation, Interviewing, Telephone</i>	<i>Travelling</i>	<i>Manual and Office Chores</i>	<i>Waiting, Tea Breaks, etc.</i>
<i>Highland County</i>					
Children's Officer . . .	20	48	26	—	6
<i>West of Scotland Burgh A</i>					
Children's Officer . . .	17	38	26	5	11
<i>West of Scotland Burgh B</i>					
Children's Officer . . .	23	41	27	1	9
Asst. Children's Officer . . .	30	40	18	1	11
<i>Western County</i>					
Children's Officer . . .	43	45	8	—	4
Deputy Children's Officer . . .	40	33	19	—	8
C.C.O. 1	32	37	20	2	8
C.C.O. 2	46	29	17	1	7
C.C.O. 3	31	37	24	1	7
<i>East of Scotland Burgh C</i>					
Children's Officer . . .	24	31	26	1	18
Asst. Children's Officer . . .	39	27	21	7	6
<i>East of Scotland Burgh D</i>					
Children's Officer . . .	31	50	16	—	3
Asst. Children's Officer . . .	39	35	22	1	3
<i>Eastern County</i>					
Children's Officer . . .	20	40	27	8	5
C.C.O. 1	13	53	22	7	5
C.C.O. 2	17	42	27	6	8
C.C.O. 3	19	37	30	7	7

children in care, and to adoption duties. Preventive work, here and elsewhere, was largely a matter of seeing people and talking to them. In "Eastern County" only 10 per cent. of time was taken up in writing, and one child care officer, uniquely, spent more time dictating than writing.

Work Contacts

76. Paper work is communication of one kind or other. Indeed, all the work of children's departments could be described as a matter of communication. They act on information which they receive by word of mouth or in writing, and they act by saying or writing things to people. One way of considering the work of a department, therefore, is to set down the kinds of people with whom

its members communicated during the recording period, i.e. the people whom they met and talked with, or spoke with on the telephone, sat in meetings with, or whom they wrote to or who wrote to them.

77. A good deal of paper work was not treated as communication – writing up case notes and diaries, for example, and completing routine forms – so that the figures of “oral and written communication” given in Table 9, when combined, show a total in excess of that for communication with others. The difference arising from such causes is, of course, artificial and need not concern us. However, it also proved impossible for most recorders to maintain a complete record of all correspondence, and the morning post received and some of the evening post despatched was, so far as records from four departments were concerned, communication with unidentified persons. Interviews, conversations, meetings and telephone conversation seem to have been recorded fully by everyone within the limits mentioned in paragraph 8.

78. Recorded communications took up just over half of the seventeen professional workers’ time. Two-fifths of all this communication was internal to the local authority – over one-fifth inside the department itself. A further one-fifth of communications involved other local government departments, police and law officers, officials and professional workers. The remaining two-fifths of communications were with foster-parents (very largely) and with children, parents, and other adults involved in individual cases.

79. Conversation with other members of the same department is by far the largest single item in most cases. As one might expect, the larger the department, the more time was taken up in this way. The professional staff of “Eastern County”, for example, spent 97 of their 585 hours of working time (excluding journeys) in talking with each other. Rather more than half this (51 hours) was spent in case discussions. Communication inside the department, in fact, took up well over a third of all the time the professional staff of the “Eastern County” spent in communication of any sort. Other departments spent a good deal less time in each others’ company. In “Western County”, whereas the Children’s Officer and his deputy saw a good deal of each other, the latter spent only an hour or so with the three Child Care Officers during the month, and the Children’s Officer much less; the Child Care Officers themselves spent only one or two hours each week in touch with the rest of the departmental staff.

80. There were three departments with two professional workers. In two of them there was a good deal of discussion between them, approximating for all four recorders to four hours a week each. In the third, they saw each other for rather less than an hour a week.

81. Outside the department, a further tenth of all professional workers’ time (or a fifth of their “communication time”) was taken up with other departments of the local authority and children’s homes staff. The recording period included a meeting of the children’s committee for every authority except “Eastern County”, when the meeting was arranged and then postponed at short notice. Three children’s officers spent less than 20 minutes a week with, or in communication with, the committee, or its members, or any councillors. The other four spent between half-an-hour and an hour a week all told in touch with their committee, its individual members, and councillors. Child care officers spent less time in this way; one spent a quarter of an hour with committee and councillors, or in correspondence with them; five more spent an average of three minutes a week, and five had no contact whatsoever.

82. Generally speaking, there seemed to us to have been an unexpectedly small amount of contact with members of the children's committee, and virtually none, so far as we are able to judge, in five departments out of seven, apart from attending the committee meeting and preparing for it. We should add that a partial explanation of this has been suggested - the impending municipal elections mentioned in an earlier paragraph.

83. All children's officers and most of their staff had some contact with the Treasurer's Department and with the Town Clerk's Department, but this did not amount to much beyond formal transactions. Business with the Housing Department and the Medical Officer of Health's Department bulked much larger but fluctuated a good deal. One children's officer spent more than twice as much time as anyone else with the M.O.H.'s Department, another with the Education Department. Such variations can ordinarily be assumed to be due to special circumstances, but there does in general seem to be a strong connection between the amount the children's department saw of other departments and their physical proximity. One children's officer spent as much time in touch with the Housing Department as with the whole of the rest of the authority, and twice as much time as he spent with the staff of the Children's Home; the Housing Department was a few steps across the corridor of the authority's main building. In another department the professional staff spent altogether some 14 hours in the M.O.H.'s Department out of the 29 they spent in conversation and correspondence with other local authority departments. They were housed together with the M.O.H.'s Department a short distance away from the main council offices.

84. There seems, in practice, to have been little or no organised co-ordination of the work of the children's department with that of those other departments of the local authority which might be expected to impinge on the general field of operations of child care. Professional workers do deal with other departments when occasions arise, of course, but the contrast between the 317 hours professional workers spent in conversation and communication within their departments and the 21 hours they used for dealing with other welfare departments in their authority, the 27 for the Medical Officer of Health's Departments, the 40 they spent with housing officials, and the 7 they spent with the Education Department appears to us to indicate a surprisingly formalistic interpretation of their functions and of the objectives to which the service - in common with other statutory and voluntary agencies - is supposed to be directed. This impression is heightened by the very large differences in the amount of contact different children's departments had with the other closely related services. In drawing attention to this and similar features of our results we should also remark on the connection between them and the pressure on the time of professional workers evident from the hours worked by most, and the amount of time spent in travelling.

85. Dealings with Children's Home staff accounted for a sizeable amount of time in most departments - eleven hours over the whole period for the children's officers in "Highland County" and in "Eastern County". The least amount of communication occurred in the largest authority, with four children's homes - an average of $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours for each of the five professional workers as against an average of $6\frac{1}{2}$ hours for all seventeen.

86. There was little traffic of correspondence or conversation with other children's departments. In "Burgh A", the Children's Officer spent over 4 hours

in this way during the four weeks, but this arose from a special commitment, and elsewhere it fluctuated between a few minutes and an hour or so. There was about the same amount of business involving communication with voluntary societies, again with the exception of "Burgh A", where work in connection with Scouts and World Refugee Year raised the amount of time spent in communication with voluntary societies to 28 hours – over a quarter of all time spent in communication, and 18 per cent. of all his working time. Twelve professional workers had any contact at all with the Royal Scottish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children; this amounted to half-an-hour for each of them for the four-week period.

87. Communication with professional people with some direct concern for children – doctors, teachers, almoners, ministers, and nurses – was in the nature of things, episodic and incidental, but, even so, occurred rather less frequently than we had expected. The seventeen professional workers spent 39 minutes, all told, in communication with ministers during the four weeks. Correspondence and telephone conversations with teachers were more frequent, and occurred during most professional workers' four-week periods, but even so amounted to no more than an average of 10 minutes a week. Contact with hospital staff took up more time when it occurred at all, which happened with about half the seventeen workers; one children's officer spent four hours and another three hours in touch with doctors and nurses.

88. Police and probation officers entered a good deal into the work of the largest department, accounting for 12½ hours – rather more than the 10½ hours which all five professional workers spent in conversation and correspondence with children during the four weeks. The Children's Officer of "Burgh A" also devoted over 5 hours to police and probation officers, but elsewhere little more than an hour or so were spent in conversation or communication with them and for most workers this kind of contact took up little or no time. Most departments had some business with Sheriff's Court officials, but only in one case was this protracted to more than 2 hours in the four weeks. Remand home and prison officers, again, figure fairly largely in the conversations and correspondence of "Western County", taking up nearly 5 hours of the Children's Officer's time, but usually no more than five minutes elsewhere.

89. Parents, foster-parents, and other adults connected with the children with whom professional workers were concerned during the four weeks formed the largest group of outside people in direct touch with departments. Correspondence and meetings with foster parents took up anything from 3½ hours of one child care officer's time to 2½ hours of another's, with the average at 10 hours. Children's own parents entered a good deal less into professional work, communication with them taking up an average of just over 6 hours for each professional worker, and ranging from as little as 1 hour and 20 minutes for the whole four weeks for one child care officer to 12 hours for another. Written correspondence featured more largely in the case of adoptive parents, and the time recorded for dealing with them may thus be regarded as artificially low, but even so they took up an average of 2½ hours for each professional worker, and much more – 4 hours – for each professional member of the staff of "Western County".

90. Conversations and correspondence with all children amounted to some 4 per cent. of all professional workers' time. There are very considerable departures from this average. The Children's Officer of "Burgh C" recorded 18

hours spent in this way, but a great deal of this time, apparently, was devoted to fetching a child by car from the south of England. The Children's Officer of "Highland County" spent some 15 hours talking with children, or in correspondence with them (a figure which includes visits to the Children's Home for this purpose). Two Child Care Officers in "Eastern County" recorded 16 and 17 hours with children, but otherwise, seven professional workers spent between 5 and 9 hours in this way, and six spent two hours or less during the whole four weeks.

Dealing with Cases

91. The schedule contained a section marked "child concerned", in which recorders were asked to write the name, reference number or some other identification of particular children, families, or cases with whom they were dealing during the episode recorded on the schedule. If the child were also present, he would of course have been referred to in the Section "person with".

92. The number of separate references collected from each of the seven departments' returns is given below, and may be compared with the average numbers of children in care through the year, as shown in official returns.

	<i>No. of Professional staff</i>	<i>*No. of separate individual and family cases referred to during 4 weeks</i>	<i>Average No. of children in care during the year (to nearest 5)</i>
Highland County	1	117	90
Burgh A	1	77	60
Burgh B	2	155	95
Western County	5	437	365
Burgh C	2	220	120
Burgh D	2	162	95
Eastern County	4	376	320

** including references by secretarial staff*

93. The figures in the second column are a not unfair indication of the "case-load" on the department as a whole, although it should be borne in mind that – especially with families in difficulties but perhaps with no children actually in care – a "case" may represent several persons. Clearly, the professional activities of the departments ramified widely beyond the supervision of children in care, as indeed they are intended to.

94. More important, the figures in paragraph 92 demonstrate that the average number of children in care as rendered in official returns is an extremely unreliable guide to the case-load of departments. While for some departments the official average number of children in care approaches within a reasonable span the actual number of cases dealt with in our four weeks (in "Western County" the average number of children in care was equivalent to 85 per cent. of the cases handled), elsewhere there are sizeable differences. In "Burgh D" the official figure is equivalent to less than 60 per cent. of the actual number of cases.

95. The amount of time spent on individual cases of all kinds varied very considerably from department to department, and sometimes within departments. The Children's Officer of "Highland County" spent two-thirds of her

time on individual cases; others spent between 43 and 65 per cent. of time in this way. The time devoted by child care officers to cases varied even more. One Child Care Officer in "Western County" spent seven-eighths of her time on cases, the assistant Children's Officer in "Burgh B" as little as one-third. These times include journeys undertaken on account of particular children.

96. The number of cases dealt with by each professional worker is set out in Table 10.

While the average for each worker was 77 cases, there was a good deal of variation between departments and individuals, one child care officer dealing with as many as 146 different cases during the four weeks, and another, while absent for seven days, yet having no more than 35 to deal with during the rest of the four weeks.

97. Averages in this instance, as in many others, are extremely deceptive. While it can be said that each professional worker spent on average something between 75 and 35 minutes on each case, including journeys done in connection with them, and between 53 and 26 minutes excluding journeys, this would conceal the fact that each case can differ very widely in its demands on time. A very large proportion of the cases "dealt with" during the four weeks by each worker were disposed of in less than five or ten minutes. Others, as the last column of Table 10 shows, could consume one or two whole days.

98. Altogether, the seven departments dealt with 1,412 separate cases during the four weeks. Children in care formed just over half this total. The numbers of each type of case distinguished in the survey are:

Children in care	723
Children received into care	60
Children discharged from care	46
Adoption cases	190
Child Life Protection cases	26
Children probably about to come into care	25
Families in difficulties	180
Adults with problems	80
Other Children	63
Unidentified (Burgh C only)	19
	<hr/>
	1412
	<hr/>

99. "Families in difficulties" are meant to comprise the bulk of families on whom the children's officer was keeping a watchful eye, or who had been evicted, or were in other straits which might call for assistance or intervention, or reported "problem families." "Adults with problems" include unmarried mothers applying to the children's officer and an assortment of other cases in which parents themselves have made the approach to the department.

100. The case-load of different departments and of individual workers within them is shown in Table 11. Many cases entered into the work of more than one member of a department, so that the total case-load of a department is something less than the sum of the case-loads of individual professional workers. Such overlapping is much more evident for children in care and children being received into care than for the other types of case.

101. Roughly one-fifth of all cases related to "preventive work", a term which includes dealings or negotiations with parents of children probably coming into

Table 10. Time Devoted to Individual Cases by Professional Workers

Professional Staff	No. of cases in 4 weeks	Total Time on Cases hrs.	Travelling Time on Cases hrs.	Average Time per Case mins.	Longest Case	
					hrs. mins.	Description
<i>Western County</i>						
Children's Officer .	69	56	21	29	2 15	Child being taken into care.
Asst. Children's Officer	127	103	29	35	9 51	Child absconded after being taken into care.
C.C.O. 1 . . .	134	115	30	39	4 24	Children of one family being taken into care.
C.C.O. 2 . . .	118	76	18	29	2 53	Family in difficulties.
C.C.O. 3 . . .	138	125	35	40	6 5	One of family of 4 children in care.
<i>Burgh C</i>						
Children's Officer .	145	111	40	30	11 10	Child in care; out of parental control.
Asst. Children's Officer	105	95	20	41	3 3	Child in care.
<i>Highland County</i>						
Children's Officer .	98	127	39	54	7 31	3 children in care; mother temporarily ill or disabled.
<i>Burgh A</i>						
Children's Officer .	69	67	6	53	4 19	Child in care.
<i>Burgh B</i>						
Children's Officer .	112	117	42	39	4 2	Child being taken into care.
Asst. Children's Officer	35	34	11	40	2 49	Brother and sister in care.
<i>Burgh D</i>						
Children's Officer .	126	106	17	42	7 52	Child being taken into care.
Asst. Children's Officer	104	96	20	45	5 58	Child for adoption.
<i>Eastern County</i>						
Children's Officer .	111	109	47	33	14 43	Child in care.
C.C.O. 1 . . .	137	115	24	37	4 49	Child in care.
C.C.O. 2 . . .	146	107	8	39	5 38	2 brothers in care—mother temporarily incapacitated.
C.C.O. 3 . . .	137	95	16	34	7 56	Child being taken into care.

Table 11. Case Load

Department	Children in care	Children received into care	Children discharged from care	Adoptive Cases	Child Life Protection	Children probably about to enter into care	Families in difficulties	Adults with problems	Other Children (not in care)	Unidentified cases	No. of Cases TOTAL
<i>Highland County</i>											
Children's Officer	65	3	2	8	2	3	6	6	3	—	98
<i>Burgh A</i>											
Children's Officer	36	2	—	5	3	—	18	2	3	—	69
<i>Burgh B</i>											
Children's Officer	50	10	4	17	—	1	24	1	5	—	102
Asst. Children's Officer	15	6	1	—	—	—	10	1	2	—	35
<i>Department</i>	50	12	5	17	—	1	30	2	5	—	122
<i>Western County</i>											
Children's Officer	44	8	—	5	—	—	7	3	2	—	69
Asst. Children's Officer	73	9	3	21	1	—	8	10	2	—	127
C.C.O. 1	73	6	1	23	—	—	15	15	1	—	134
C.C.O. 2	59	2	3	26	1	—	18	4	5	—	118
C.C.O. 3	60	5	—	42	4	—	21	6	—	—	138
<i>Department</i>	217	19	7	104	4	—	54	22	10	—	437
<i>Burgh C</i>											
Children's Officer	76	4	2	7	6	—	19	15	6	10	145
Asst. Children's Officer	60	3	1	13	4	1	7	2	5	9	105
<i>Department</i>	102	4	3	18	7	1	26	17	7	19	204
<i>Burgh D</i>											
Children's Officer	53	6	8	15	1	1	13	20	9	—	126
Asst. Children's Officer	42	6	8	12	1	1	11	14	9	—	104
<i>Department</i>	61	7	11	17	2	1	18	25	9	—	151

Eastern County

Children's Officer	73	4	9	3	2	6	2	—	12	—	111
C.C.O. 1	82	10	7	7	1	5	11	1	14	—	138
C.C.O. 2	85	7	6	6	5	8	14	4	11	—	146
C.C.O. 3	83	6	9	13	1	9	7	1	8	—	137
<i>Department</i>	192	13	18	21	8	19	28	6	26	—	331
TOTAL	723	60	46	190	26	25	180	80	63	19	1412

Table 12. Average Time Per Case

<i>Department</i>	Children in Care	Children Admitted into Care	Children Discharged from Care	Adoption Cases	Child Life Prot.	Children probably about to move into Care	Families in Distress	Admits with Probation	Other Children (not in care)	Unsettled Cases
Average number of minutes spent on each case by professional staff.										
Highland County	51	146	43	70	29	7	50	44	36	—
Burgh A	61	98	—	43	15	—	41	68	46	—
Burgh B	56	103	32	44	—	95	22	16	13	—
Western County	48	128	17	36	34	—	42	54	25	—
Burgh C	59	39	11	28	22	30	23	36	87	19
Burgh D	55	236	57	100	46	113	50	44	40	—
Eastern County	69	164	55	20	52	25	22	24	31	—
All Departments	58	138	44	41	36	30	33	37	39	19

(travelling time omitted)

care. Adoption cases, which formed almost a quarter of all cases dealt with by "Western County", amounted to much less than a tenth of the cases of the other six departments.

102. Table 12 gives the average amount of departmental time devoted to different kinds of case. Each child in care dealt with at all took up an average of just under one hour of the whole four weeks, and the individual departments approximated fairly closely to this average. In almost every department, receiving a child into care made far heavier demands on time – over two hours and a quarter each. An obvious inference is that the turnover of children in care has considerable influence on the amount of work falling on a department; one with a relatively high turnover, like "Burgh B", being much more pressed than others with the same or even a slightly higher number of children in care.

103. Discharging children from care appears by contrast to be a relatively straightforward matter, making slightly less demand on time than the average case. The large numbers of families involving the departments in preventive work appear also to have taken up little more than half-an-hour each during the four weeks, although this average conceals, like all others, very wide differences between individual cases.

Work for Other Authorities

104. Some of the work of departments was, of course, done on behalf of other departments, whose children might be boarded-out in their area, or who might be seeking information or help. All recorders were asked to indicate when any episode involved work on behalf of another local authority. The only authority in which such work amounted to a significant proportion of the total working time was "Highland County" whose Children's Officer, secretarial assistant, and part-time typist recorded altogether 12½ hours so spent – 3 per cent. of all working time.

Figure 1. The Time-Sheet

One sheet was used to record an "episode"

Recording involved - (1) Writing in the 'time from.' (2) Indicating, by initials, code number, etc., any cases of children in care, families, etc., being dealt with, if any. (3) Writing in names or initials of persons or organisations, who were present or on the telephone or being corresponded with, if any. (4) Ticking the 'mode' used. (5) Ticking the place in which the episode was occurring (6) Ticking the activity, or activities involved. (7) Indicating whether the episode was work for another local authority, or a voluntary organisation. (8) Writing in the 'time to.'

Thus every sheet had to show the 'time from' and 'time to', Mode, Place, and Activity. It would often also contain references to children concerned, and persons with, and, occasionally, to work done for other bodies.

The code number in the top left-hand corner identified the Children's Department and the member of staff.

Some 22,000 of these forms were completed during the study.

<i>C.C. Scot.</i>	<i>Please Use a new sheet every time the Activity, persons With, or Child concerned changes. Verify that you have completed all entries in every sheet.</i>	<i>Day</i>
A 4/1		

<i>Time</i> from	<i>Child concerned</i>
to		

<i>With</i> (Persons and organisations present, on telephone, or in correspondence)

<i>Mode</i>		<i>Place</i>	
0 <input type="checkbox"/> Interview or Conversation		0 <input type="checkbox"/> Own Office	
1 <input type="checkbox"/> Telephone		1 <input type="checkbox"/> Elsewhere in local authority offices	
2 <input type="checkbox"/> Dictating		2 <input type="checkbox"/> Other local authority offices	
3 <input type="checkbox"/> Typing		3 <input type="checkbox"/> Other Organisations' Offices	
4 <input type="checkbox"/> Observation		4 <input type="checkbox"/> Travelling	
5 <input type="checkbox"/> Writing, drafting		5 <input type="checkbox"/> Child's Family Home	
6 <input type="checkbox"/> In attendance		6 <input type="checkbox"/> Local Authority or Voluntary Children's Home	
7 <input type="checkbox"/> Waiting		7 <input type="checkbox"/> Foster or Adoptive Parents' Home	
8 <input type="checkbox"/> Reading		8 <input type="checkbox"/> Court	
9 <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify).....		9 <input type="checkbox"/> Own Home	
		10 <input type="checkbox"/> Elsewhere (specify).....	

<i>Activity</i>		
01 <input type="checkbox"/> Investigating Family and Personal Problems		
02 <input type="checkbox"/> Investigating Reported Need for Care		
03 <input type="checkbox"/> Family Problems of Children Not in Care		
04 <input type="checkbox"/> Family Problems of Children in Care		
05 <input type="checkbox"/> Receiving New Case		
06 <input type="checkbox"/> Legal and Administrative Problems of Child		
07 <input type="checkbox"/> Placing Child		
08 <input type="checkbox"/> Presenting and Recording Case or Family Problem		
09 <input type="checkbox"/> Child's Progress, Welfare and Future		
10 <input type="checkbox"/> Investigating Prospective Homes (Foster or Adoptive)		
11 <input type="checkbox"/> Adoption Duties (Formal, other than 10)		
12 <input type="checkbox"/> Child Protection Duties		
13 <input type="checkbox"/> Organisation and Finance, Committee preparation		
14 <input type="checkbox"/> General Conversation with Children		
15 <input type="checkbox"/> Outfitting Children, buying equipment		
16 <input type="checkbox"/> General Service Matters		
17 <input type="checkbox"/> Private and Personal		

Episode concerned with work for	Other Local Authority	<input type="text"/>	1
	Voluntary Organisation	<input type="text"/>	2

Conclusion

The purpose of this report has been to present the findings of the study which relate to the operation and staffing of the Child Care Service. The main value of the study, we believe, lies in the comprehensiveness of the view it affords of seven departments at work. This value, such as it is, will be lowered if points are singled out, treated as important or revealing, and discussed out of the context of the rest of the findings. Nevertheless, some of the findings themselves seem to need something more in the way of underlining or interpretation than we have thought proper to interpose in the text of the report. The observations we make here should therefore be read as a comment on the report rather than as a summary of its findings.

The method we have used in this study means looking at the service in a single unchanging perspective – the way in which the time available for work is used among tasks, places, cases and people. Accepted uncritically, the use of the single dimension of time as a measure of comparison could be thoroughly misleading; ten minutes' talk with the parents of a child at a crucial time might well be far more worth while, not only in the ultimate, but indefinable, terms of 'human values', but in the sheer accomplishment of professional objectives, and even the saving of future effort and public money, than many hours of routine compliance with statutory duties, committee meetings, and the like. This is unchallengeable common sense, and constitutes a sizeable qualification to be borne in mind in considering this report. It is also one reason why this kind of study is (perhaps fortunately) inappropriate as a means of measuring individual effectiveness.

Yet, in considering the activities of individuals (and still more of organised groups of people) over a period of some weeks it seems reasonable to presume some correspondence between time given to any one task or function, or spent in any place or with other people concerned in one's work, and its importance in the eyes of the individual or the organisation. This is the more so if one considers that time is a major dimension of activity in our kind of society; in most kinds of work the time spent on – or required by – any particular task is seen usually as proportionate to the effort, and so to its 'value' in relation to the general objectives of the organisation. Moreover, all recorders in these studies have accepted the rough equivalence of time and effort (or 'importance') as axiomatic. What our assumption amounts to, in fact, is that in each of the distinguishable fields of task, types of place, kinds of person, mode of activity, and so forth, which concerned our thirty-four recorders, there is a normal distribution of the time spent within each separate field, type, etc., over episodes of varying importance, effectiveness, or value. Thus, over the whole four weeks, an activity or a place, or a direction of communication which includes more episodes of outstanding importance than others will also include a rather larger number of episodes of lesser importance, some of them perhaps ancillary or supplementary to the important ones, than do other activities, places, or directions of communication. In other words, we assume that the time devoted to an activity extends beyond the important aspects of it so as to render the total time spent on the activity during the four weeks roughly commensurate with the *effort* expended on it and the *importance* attached to it at the time.

What complicates one's appreciation of the validity of this assumption is that the importance attached to each of the several activities included in a job fluctuates a good deal, so that in retrospect, or when taking a broad view of one's work at any particular time, there may well be a sizeable discrepancy between the amount of time during a longish working period one imagines one did devote, or commonly devotes, to a particular activity – especially the ones that are felt to be the more central to one's professional role – and the time it has in fact taken up.

At all events, the length of time spent at work seems to have been read in previous studies as of almost critical importance; certainly it is the finding which has aroused the widest interest. Taking the same basis of reckoning as we have used in this study (i.e., including 'business lunches', journeys on behalf of the firm, work done at home, tea breaks at work, and so forth) the 36 members of the top managements of three Scottish engineering concerns – all of them successful and enterprising businesses – work an average week of 41½ hours. The Children's Officers in the present study worked a 45 hour week, the Child Care Officers a 43½ hour week. The range of variation from the average in all three cases was much the same.

It is therefore fair to say that professional workers in the Child Care Service work longer hours than is usual for managers, and, we think it is safe to add, than for most professional or administrative workers. Their working hours are also irregular, unpredictably cutting into evenings and week-ends. They are at all times liable to calls which they must regard as putting overriding obligations on them.

Consideration of how this affects the professional role and the work of departments must inevitably be directed to the negative aspects of some of our findings. For example, it is clear that little or no time is left to most workers for those activities and pursuits and contacts which serve to maintain or improve their professional understanding or might enable them to reconsider their approach to their tasks; one Child Care Officer out of the seventeen professional staff attended one of the rare week-end professional conferences which happened to take place during the four week period. There is no evidence that any time was spent in reading literature or in discussions which bear on the general or specific psychological, therapeutic or social considerations which activate child care work.

In more concrete terms, the pressure on time is clearly revealed in the trivial proportion of time spent in conversation with children (about 2 per cent.). Correspondence and more formal interviews with children present increased this proportion to 4 per cent., i.e., under two hours a week on average.

These proportions must strike most people, professional as well as lay, as very small indeed. They include, it should be said, all recorded episodes during which children (whether in care or not) were present or were being communicated with; they include, for example, conversations on journeys. Personal meeting, friendly conversation, and familiar acquaintance with the children for whom the Children's Officer and his assistant have assumed so much responsibility is properly regarded as the vitally important core of the professional worker's role, affording the foundation of the whole process by which something of the rights of the child to adult care and regard may be restored to him.

The conditions under which the service operates clearly make it extremely difficult for the professional worker to find time for creating and developing

any but the most formal and fleeting acquaintanceship with children. How does this pressure arise?

Sixty per cent. of professional workers' time referred to specific cases. A good part of this was spent in formal correspondence and documentation. Dealings with parents, foster parents and adoptive parents also entered largely into work with individual cases – much of it by way of correspondence. But a quarter of this time was spent in journeys to individual cases.

In fact, one quarter of all time was spent by professional staff in travelling. This proportion was irrespective of the size, population and character of the local government area; it was just over a quarter, for example for the Children's Officers of Highland County and a small burgh.

This expenditure of time was much more than the people concerned imagined, when they were asked for estimates after the recording period. They also tended to underestimate the amount of time spent in administrative work of all kinds, which took up a third of all professional workers' time.

Most professional workers, indeed, spent an unexpectedly large amount of time again, about a third – on paper work, i.e., on reading, writing and dictating. Of these three, dictating took up a very much smaller amount of time than did writing. There was, indeed, some evidence to suggest that much time is spent in some departments in writing out letters and reports and having them typed thereafter, although recording machines are now said to be finding their way into some local government offices.

The larger the department, in general, the more professional time was taken up in administration and paper work, a conclusion that should surprise few people now that the once-fashionable equation of size with efficiency has been found to be of such limited application. It should be said, however, that some of the burden of office work falling on the largest Children's Department was made up of financial transactions and administrative business which other local authorities handled centrally.

Delays, and waits, when nothing useful could be done (stops on journeys, and visits to homes to find the family not there) occurred in most professional workers' working time, but only in three cases did this amount in all to a serious loss of time (over ten per cent. of all working time). Many, by contrast, seem to have had very few pauses in days of continuous activity. Secretarial staff, however, did spend an appreciable portion of their time – over one-eighth of the total time for all departments combined – in tea-breaks and waiting.

In broad terms, then, the question of how the pressure on working time arises finds its answer in three kinds of demand: travelling, paper work, and, of course, professional duties themselves – the supervision of children in care, case-work with families in difficulties, adoption duties, placing children in homes, finding and selecting foster homes, and the rest.

The work falling under this heading is not easily related to accepted official categories based on statutory functions. To begin with, work of this nature – i.e., on individual cases – varied widely from person to person, one professional worker spending seven-eighths of all working time on it, and another no more than a third. Secondly, the number of cases of children in care actually dealt with during the four week period formed about three-fifths (61 per cent.) of that officially recorded as being the 'average number of children in care during the year'.

On the other hand, cases of children in care (and being received into care or discharged during the period) formed almost exactly the same proportion (62 per cent.) of the cases handled by all professional workers. The other types

of case dealt with were families in difficulties (13 per cent.), children for adoption (9 per cent.), adult clients applying to the department for help or advice (5 per cent.), children probably about to come into care (3 per cent.), and Child Life Protection cases and other children (8 per cent.).

The time spent on individual cases of children who were in care throughout the period formed twenty per cent. of professional working time (excluding travelling).

Cases making most demands on time were those of children received into care during the recording period. This work, in which professional responsibilities clearly override all other considerations, took up as much time as all preventive work – families in difficulties, other adult clients, presumptive cases, other children – put together.

Preventive work, identified as the first three of the Activities listed in the schedule, took up one-tenth of all professional staff's time. It was felt by them however, to bulk much larger, even in those departments which spent more than the average proportion of time in this way. In this and in other ways, it seems that the professional worker's conception of his job involves a much greater application to the case-work and therapeutic aspects of the service than his situation allows.

However, the fact is that time for this central job of professional work with individual cases of all kinds, children in care, or coming into care, and preventive work alike, is seriously reduced by the time needed for journeys and the demands of paper work. Travelling is an essential requirement of the professional task, and there is no evidence to suggest that it is, or should be, or could be made to occupy less than the quarter of all working time it occupies. Administrative and office work, on the other hand, is in principle ancillary, but in practice probably here, as elsewhere, tends to be dealt with first and elaborately because such matters force their attention most easily on professional people, seem as though they can be dealt with simply and expeditiously, and, more important, are the main medium by which other professional workers, officials, and employers are aware of the activities of the department.

Beyond enjoying, in all probability, an undue priority, office work – because it is regarded as an intrusion, because its sheer volume is, as we have seen, unsuspected, because it is regarded as within the inborn competence of any professional worker – seems also more time-consuming than need be. Professional staff spend over half their time, on average, in their own offices or in other offices of the local authority. The Secretarial staff, nevertheless, were not fully extended, on the evidence of this study. It seems to us that examination of the tasks, the administrative system and the office methods in use might suggest substantial savings in time which might then be freed for more specifically professional activity.

The larger administrative context of departmental work raises two further matters which seem worth consideration: the negligible extent of working contact between Children's Departments and the Children's Committees of local authorities, and the seemingly haphazard character of liaison with other local authority departments concerned in the same general field of social welfare. We have no evidence to suggest that the slight acquaintance the Children's Committee has with the work for which it is responsible is unwelcome to the staff themselves, but the dependence of working relationships with other interested departments on the sheer juxtaposition of offices or on *ad hoc* and officially mandatory communication is deplored.

The two matters seem to be related. The administrative linkage between the different departments of a local authority is ostensibly the system of committees each reporting to, and part of, the council itself. What suggests itself to us is that the existence of this formal system of co-ordination inhibits the creation of an operationally effective system of inter-departmental liaison which would directly involve officials. It might be, too, that this system could provide the appropriate organisational setting for a senior person working in a consultant capacity to a number of departments.

The professional role of Children's Officers and Child Care Officers seems to stand in need of definition in other respects.

Secretarial staff in smaller authorities participate to some extent in the professional work of the department. There is nothing to indicate that, in doing so, they usurp the professional role of the Children's Officers. The impression rather is that they 'hold the fort' during the lengthy periods when the Children's Officer is out of the office, and that they take over some of the more routine and straightforward contacts with client families and foster parents.

While we do not advocate the interposition of rigid lines of demarcation between jobs, all of which should be regarded by all staff as serving the same ultimate ends, there does seem some need for reconsidering the part which should be, and the part actually, played by secretarial assistants in the work of the service.

There is also, we suggest some need for Children's Officers and Child Care Officers to reconsider their professional affiliations. There is no clear division of professional activities, as against administrative responsibilities, between the two groups. They are, nevertheless, organised into two quite separate professional bodies. In so far as this is based on invidious distinctions of status and privilege, on the one hand, and of professional qualifications on the other, the division is certainly unfortunate and probably harmful to the service and to the profession. On the face of it, the service is not yet large enough and has not yet won sufficient public recognition and material backing for it to be able to afford two professional organisations.

